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DEPARTMENT FOR INR/R/MR, EAP/RSP/TC, EAP/PA, EAP/PD -
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SUBJECT: "LIBERTY TIMES" ARTICLE DETAILING SENSITIVE
DEALINGS BETWEEN TAIWAN AND THE UNITED STATES

Summary: The pro-independence Chinese-language "Liberty Times" Tuesday (1/18/05) carried an article written by journalist Tsou Jin-wen to refute information provided in an excerpt from the book entitled "Dialogues and Confrontations: Political Competition between Taiwan and China." According to Tsou, President Chen Shui-bian was unhappy after reading Wang's account of a December 1, 2003 meeting and Tsou wrote the article by quoting President Chen's words to clarify the mistakes in Wang's book. According to Tsou, Moriarty merely elaborated on U.S. policy and did not say anything beyond that. Full text translation of the article follows.

"High-Ranking Communications Between Taiwan and the United States Have Not Stagnated Due to Taiwan's Referendum. Moriarty At That Time Was Polite and Candid When Meeting With Bian, [Moriarty] Did Not Say 'Strong Words.' Bush Has [More Than Once] Sent Envoys to Taiwan Since Bian Won Re-election"

[Journalist Tsou Jin-wen wrote in the pro-independence Liberty Times, 01/18]

"December 1, 2003 President George W. Bush's special envoy, U.S. National Security Council Senior Director for Asian Affairs James F. Moriarty, came to Taipei and visited President Chen Shui-bian to express to Taiwan the sentiment that 'it would be best if the referendum were not held.' However, after President Chen and President Bush both won re-election, similar secret high-ranking communications never stopped, and 'have occurred more than once,' which has led to the continuous construction of cooperative Taiwan-U.S. relationship for an additional four years.

"A book scheduled to be released today [1/18/05] has touched on some details of Taiwan-U.S. high-ranking interactions [back then], and some contents of that book have recently been revealed by a newspaper, beneath the headline: 'Moriarty Met With Bian and Said Strong Words; the [Atmosphere of] U.S.-Taiwan Mutual Trust Suddenly Changed.' President Chen Shui-bian read it recently and was unhappy with the content, hence, he could not help but want to say something.

"President Chen considers that 'I was the one who personally conducted the dialogue, but the descriptions in the book are far from the fact.' Core staff members [to the President] believe that the author is a journalist focused on cross-Strait relations and obviously does not [have the ability to] grasp the information regarding the Taiwan-U.S. envoy issue accurately. Since the issue has become a historical event, it is necessary to recover some truth to stop the rumors from spreading.

"What actually did Moriarty and Bian talk about? A high-ranking Presidential Office official said President Chen met with Moriarty in the early evening that day at the Mt. Jade Residence and the talk lasted a little more than an hour. Moriarty was accompanied by AIT Director Douglas Paal, [and held in] the presence of the then Presidential Office Secretary-General Chiu Yi-jen and two other core staffers to the President. The new book said 'National Security Council Consulting Member Ke Cheng-heng personally welcomed the visitors in front of the Presidential Residence,' but Ke was not only not at the scene, but also completely unaware of its occurrence.

"A Presidential Office official pointed out that Moriarty handed over President Bush's personal letter when he arrived. It was after President Chen finished reading the letter that Chen and Moriarty started the dialogue. Moriarty explicitly stated information, but with a polite attitude. Moriarty stressed that the Bush administration supported Taiwan, but Bush was extremely concerned about the possible negative impact that Taiwan's referendum might cause on cross-Strait relations. It was extremely probable that China would

react radically.

"The President and Moriarty also discussed the question whether [the referendum] was involved in a change of the status quo. Moriarty believed that both sides of the Strait should avoid moves that might possibly cause any changes to the status quo in order to maintain regional stability.

"Moriarty candidly said that the referendum made the United States uncomfortable, and also made the position of the United States difficult on cross-Straits relations, 'It would be best if the referendum were not held.'

"After saying these words, Moriarty was afraid that Taiwan would misunderstand the United States as putting pressure solely on Taiwan and he, thus, explained that the United States not only was concerned about Taiwan but also putting pressure on China often to ask China not to make any moves. The purpose was to maintain the peace across the Taiwan Strait, and the United States was unwilling to see any [cross-Straits] arms races. Hence, the United States hoped that Taiwan would not have the impression that the United States [wanted to only] persuaded Taiwan [of these things].

"According to a related message, President Chen stressed to Moriarty that the purpose of pushing for a referendum was to contribute to the strengthening and deepening of democracy; the construction of a new constitution was to increase government efficiency and to enhance [Taiwan's] competitive ability. Both [the referendum and the new constitution] had nothing to do with unification/independence, and did not disobey the 'Five Nos.'

"President Chen spent a lot of time explaining that the constitution, constructed in Nanjing, China, was not suitable for the current situation in Taiwan. He also told Moriarty that 'we understand the concern of the United States and the sensitivity of this issue to China. Hence, when designing the questions for the defensive referendum, we have proposed them in a very gentle way.' It was a domestic question whether we agreed to improve cross-Straits relations or to accept U.S. arms procurements.

"The President also expressed that 'my point of view does not differ from that of the United States.' We all hope that the status quo of Taiwan would not be changed by The People's Republic of China. In fact, we could also hold referendums on issues such as whether [the Taiwan] people support unification, or one country but two systems. We, however, did not do so, which showed that we had cautiously dealt with this matter from the beginning.

"The President also stressed to Moriarty that 'I am one who keeps his promises. I will not drag the United States down, but I hope that the United States understands that the defensive referendum has actually nothing to do with unification or independence.'

"The President pointed out to Moriarty at the end of the dialogue that [Taiwan] was willing to listen further to the opinions of the United States, [and said] 'if you think the questions for the peace referendum are not good enough, you may propose suggestions.'

"A Presidential Office official said that President Bush's personal letter to President Chen used leader-to-leader words. Moriarty elaborated on the policy of the U.S. government, and, hence, there was no problem that 'Moriarty passed along messages for Bush beyond what he was authorized to say.' Moreover, Moriarty was polite and candid and he did not 'say strong words.' He told President Chen that Bush was an old friend of Taiwan and Bush's support to Taiwan was unquestionable.

"As to the latter visit paid by Wen Jiabao to the United States and [the fact that] Bush used strong words when talking about Taiwan's referendum during the meeting with Wen -- the Presidential Office believes that Wen Jiabao stepped through the front gate of the United States at that time, which meant that China put the maximum amount of pressure on the United States, and China had to achieve something regarding the Taiwan problem. Looking back on history, China put pressure on the United States, and Taiwan indirectly felt the pressure through the United States. Unless Taiwan surrendered its arms at the scene, [China's demands] could not be appeased. The question, however, is would it suit Taiwan's interests if President Chen did [or does] accordingly?

"According to our understanding, President Bush has continuously sent officials back and forth to Taiwan 'more than once' after sending Moriarty and after President Chen won reelection March 20, 2004. The communication, on an official or ad hoc basis, between high-ranking officials in the two countries has not stagnated due to Taiwan's first referendum.

"When President Chen and President Bush both won reelection, new envoys sent by President Bush came to Taiwan several times. When the envoys talked to President Chen, they mentioned nothing about the disturbances of the past. Both countries are concerned about the future and the question of how both countries will strengthen communications and interactions to tighten their collaborations.

"A Presidential Office official, hence, said that even the 'fraternal countries' like the United Kingdom and the United States have different opinions; it is impossible to say that there are no problems between Taiwan and the United States. It is, however, totally wrong if one evaluates the development of present Taiwan-U.S. relations by using the relationship between the two countries before the presidential election [in Taiwan]. Taiwan and the United States have currently started another stage of harmonization."

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